

## **Garrett Morgan**

### **“Invented the Gas Mask in 1914”**

“In 1914, Morgan patented a breathing device, or “safety hood,” providing its wearers with a safer breathing experience in the presence of smoke, gases and other pollutants. Morgan worked hard to market the device, especially to fire departments, often personally demonstrating its reliability in fires. Morgan’s breathing device became the prototype and precursor for the gas masks used during World War I, protecting soldiers from toxic gas used in warfare. The invention earned him the first prize at the Second International Exposition of Safety and Sanitation in New York City.

There was some resistance to Morgan’s devices among buyers, particularly in the South, where racial tension remained palpable despite advancements in African-American rights. In an effort to counteract the resistance to his products, Morgan hired a white actor to pose as “the inventor” during presentations of his breathing device; Morgan would pose as the inventor’s sidekick, disguised as a Native American man named “Big Chief Mason,” and, wearing his hood, enter areas otherwise unsafe for breathing. The tactic was successful; sales of the device were brisk, especially from firefighters and rescue workers.”

Source: Black Then

Information Link:

<https://blackthen.com/looking-black-on-today-in-1914-garrett-morgan-patented-the-gas-mask/>

Patent link: <https://patents.google.com/patent/US1113675A/en>